



One Night

Author: *Khloe Summers*

Category: Erotic, Romance, New Adult

Description: Can this older man fight away temptation for his best friends daughter?

Colton

Struggling is what I know best.

But I want more for my daughter.

That said, I didn't expect my buddy to offer up his.

I shouldn't hire her, she's too young, too sweet, and she's hot as sin.

I've always thought of myself as a good man, but having this curvy woman around is asking for trouble.

And trouble is hard to resist...

Nora

I've had a crush on my dad's best friend for as long as I can remember.

He's the tall, dark and brooding type with tattoos and a big ol' truck.

I shouldn't take the nanny job he's offering me, I'm going to embarrass myself.

I should focus on college and get my life in order.

I should focus on myself and work at meeting a man my own age.

Trouble is, I don't want a man my age...

I want Colton.

Total Pages (Source): 18

Page 1

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

Chapter One

Nora

This man is gorgeous. Tall, strong, built for hard work. There's not a muscle on his body that doesn't get used daily. Bulging biceps, broad shoulders, and a thick neck. There's a presence about this guy that fills the room without a word being spoken.

He brushes his big, calloused, inked up hand down over my face and stares at me with gentle, blue eyes. There isn't a lot being said, but I know how he feels. I know how badly he wants me, how hard we've tried to avoid this moment.

Slowly, he leans in, gripping the back of my neck as he pulls me close. Steam fills the spaces between us as the night sky glows with millions of bright, sparkling heartbeats from the heavens.

How the hell did I get here?

Our lips brush together gently. He tastes like warm cinnamon fresh from the oven, and he smells like cedar straight from the depths of the Rugged Mountain forest.

God, I shouldn't want this. I shouldn't want him. But the way my clit is throbbing, there's no way I'm walking away. How would I survive knowing I gave up the chance to finally feel his giant frame against mine?

A low, possessive growl crawls its way up his throat as the kiss deepens. I use the opportunity to explore his body, following a vein up and over his sculpted arm

toward his chest.

His hand is between my legs, squeezing my thigh, rubbing over the top of my pussy. I don't remember losing my panties, but I can think about that later. Right now, I need him inside of me.

With his head nuzzled into the crook of my neck, he pets my pussy, carefully stroking the seam before a splash of cool water hits my face and I'm staring up at my sister Daphne, who's laughing her ass off.

"You were thrashing in your sleep." She pushes back her dark red hair with a smile lifting her cheeks. "Tell me you weren't dreaming about Colton again."

I roll my eyes and sit up from her couch, scrubbing my eyes as I crash back to reality. I stayed here last night because it's closer to Colton's ranch than my place, though I think Daphne likes having me here too. "What time is it?"

She takes a sip of coffee and hands me a steaming mug of my own that's decorated with cats giving the middle finger. "You've got an hour."

"An hour? That's it?" I whip the blanket off and jump from the couch, rushing to the bathroom to check myself over. I'm not sure why I'm so nervous to see Colton. I've seen him a million times over the years. He's my father's best friend. He knows what I look like on good days and bad. Plus, it doesn't matter what I look like. I'm talking to him about taking a nanny job. This isn't about how puffy my eyes are or how I look in the sundress I picked out a week ago for this specific occasion. This is about how well I can take care of his kid.

"Did Mom tell you why he needed help?" My sister leans against the doorway, casually sipping her steaming cup of coffee. The woman is sexy the second she wakes up. Somehow her hair is always laying perfectly, and she was born with

natural eyeliner and the perfect complexion. She's twelve years older than me, but you wouldn't know it looking at her.

I lean into the bathroom mirror and layer on a few thick swatches of mascara over my lashes before stepping into the bright yellow sundress I bought for the occasion. "Is this too much?" I spin toward my sister, fluffing my hair and rearranging my tits to sit perfectly beneath the thin fabric.

"Yes, but you look great." She sips her coffee. "I'd love to have tits that stand up straight like that again. Are you even wearing a bra?"

"Should I not put one on?"

"Don't listen to me. I'm just jealous."

"Of what?" My eyes narrow as I glance toward her. "You're super hot. I tell you that all the time. You should quit that radio career and be a model."

"Okay... too much." She backs away from the door and leans into the armchair by the unlit fireplace. "We both know I'm not a model."

"Not yet."

Her eyes roll to the side as she takes another steaming gulp. "Okay, well... today isn't about me. It's about you," she sets her coffee on the table next to the chair, "and I'd advise you to play it safe."

"What?" My brows narrow as I try to act confused. I don't think it's working. "What are you talking about?"

"Stop. We both know you've got a thing for Colton. I get it. He's handsome. He's got

the whole rugged, single dad thing going on, but—”

“Oh, no! Do you like him, too?”

Her brows wrinkle. “No. No. No. No. God... no. I’ve known him forever. He’s Dad’s best friend, which is why it should be weird for you, too.”

“It is weird.” I offer a nervous laugh as I massage the back of my neck. “I don’t want to like him, he’s just so...” I blow out a breath and watch a strand of my hair twist around in my breath. “He’s so big and strong, and he knows everything.” I shrug. “It’s stupid. I’ve probably fixated on him for some deep-seated psychological reason that I’ll never understand. Maybe I should Google it.”

My sister widens her gaze while teasingly dangling my keys. “You better go. It’s a ten-minute drive if the cows aren’t blocking the road.”

Page 2

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

I lean in and squeeze her tight. “I’ll be back in a couple of hours. You want me to stop at the bakery and grab some donuts on my way back? I think Josie’s making those big bear claws you like.”

“Sure. We’ll eat them tonight and debrief on your day. I’ve got work until five.”

“Is it getting any better over there? I know you said you were short staff—”

“Go! We’ll talk tonight. I can’t wait to hear how this disaster in the making goes.”

“Love you too.” I roll my eyes playfully and toss her a mischievous grin as I step out onto the front porch, trying to unknot my stomach and set my head straight.

As much as I want Colton, I can’t think about him like I did in my dream. It’s weird. Way too weird.

Chapter Two

Colton

I sit at the dining room table awkwardly staring toward the young woman before me. She’s my best buddy’s daughter. I’ve known her forever and a day. It shouldn’t be awkward, but it is, which I’m pretty sure makes me a fucking creep.

“My schedule is pretty open.” She wiggles back in the chair, her breasts on display as her blonde hair falls onto her shoulders. She’s gorgeous, too gorgeous. So gorgeous, I’m not sure this arrangement is going to work. I can’t stare at those pretty blue eyes

every day and expect not to feel tortured. “The massage therapy thing is going to fall through.”

I take a sip of beer from the amber bottle sitting in front of me. It’s warm, and the sip is more of a drop, but I need to do something with this energy surging through me. “Why’s that?”

She glances down at the floor before finding my gaze again, the strap of her pretty yellow sundress falling off her shoulder.

Okay, it’s a sure thing now. This isn’t going to work.

“I’m almost done with school, and I love using my hands to heal people, but I suck at the business part of things. I have no idea how to get started finding clients, what to do with them once they get here, or how to keep my books straight.” She smiles and looks away. “I mean, I could figure it out if I had to, or I could move to the Springs and work for a spa, but everything sounds exhausting right now.”

I realize a massage isn’t sexual, but for some reason my chest tightens at the thought of her touching another man to any degree. “I could help you make a business plan. It’s been a while since I’ve done anything like that, but I have enough experience that I could help.”

What the hell am I saying?

“Oh!” Her back straightens and her voice perks as she says, “Really? You don’t have to do that. I’m here to help you, not the other way around.”

Here’s my out. I should take it. I should offer to help build the business plan and find a troll or something to help me with the kid. Clearly, I can’t be trusted around Nora.

“You’ll have plenty of time between Ellie’s activities to build your client list. Besides, you babysat a ton for me back in the day and you wouldn’t take a dime. I owe you.”

Her full cheeks turn pink. “You really don’t owe me. I—”

“I insist.” What the hell am I doing?

“Thank you! I can bring a notebook with me when I come back to start.”

“Come back,” I clear my throat, “I was hoping you could start today. I know it’s short notice, but the tractor broke down this morning, and Ellie will be home in the next hour from a play date. She’s not as patient playing outside while I work as she used to be.” I brush my hand down over my beard and stare toward the gorgeous girl I was supposed to be changing my mind about. “The pay is five thousand a month. You’d live here on the ranch, cook meals, take care of Ellie, and do general house cleaning. I don’t expect you to stop living your life. If you have classes or a date or whatever, just let me know at the beginning of the week and I’ll plan for it.”

“Oh,” her cheeks turn pink again, “I’m not dating anyone. So, there won’t be any time off for that.” I can’t tell if she’s happy about it or not.

I lean back in the dining chair awkwardly. “Girl your age should be dating, right? I guessed you were out there breaking hearts.”

Damn it! I need to shut the fuck up!

“Nope,” she laughs. “The hearts usually break me. Besides, guys my age are all the same. They don’t understand women, or anything really, except maybe dirt bikes and four wheelers. Anyway... the salary is very generous, and I’d be happy to take care of Ellie like she’s my own. Is this until the end of summer or longer?”

“We’ll keep you as long as you’ll let us.”

Wow. Really, Colton?

“Yay!” Her tone is bright as she claps her hands together excitedly. I try not to notice the way her full breasts shake as she moves, but whether I’m looking directly or not, I know it’s happening, and my cock is now throbbing and pressing at the seam of my jeans. I need to get control of myself and compartmentalize these thoughts I’m having, or this will be a fucking mess.

Page 3

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“Perfect.” I pull a credit card from my back pocket. “You can use this for incidentals. Anything you need for Ellie, the house, or your room. I tried to get it set up for you, but I’m sure it’s missing things. Feel free to put what you need on the card.” I nod up the stairs. “Yours is the last room on the right side of the hallway.”

“My room. I hadn’t thought about how I’ll have a room here.”

“Is that okay? You could always—”

“No, that’s perfect. I’m excited to see it!” She twists her golden hair to one shoulder before glancing toward me. “I guess that’s all I need. Except, oh, most importantly, is there anything specific I should know about Ellie right now? It’s been a while since I’ve babysat.”

I drag in a deep breath, transitioning my thoughts to my little ninja princess. “Well, she’s nearly five now and about to start kindergarten in the fall. She’s real imaginative. Much more creative than any kid I know. The horse barn is her personal kingdom. She’s been decorating for months. Cardboard turrets, a crown, a throne, you name it, that girl’s thought of it. Let’s see, what else... her best friend is our border collie, Blue Bell, and her favorite food is blueberry pancakes. I’m telling ya, you toss some extra syrup on a stack of those, you’ve got a friend for life.”

“Noted,” Nora says, typing down notes into her phone. “Anything else I should know?”

“Oh, bedtime is at eight. I think that’s all. I’m sure we’ll have things come up along the way. You’re more than welcome to call and ask questions. If I don’t answer, you

can come find me.”

“Sounds good!” She stretches up from the chair and pushes it in behind her, accidentally lifting the corner of her dress as she moves, showing off much more thigh than she should be. “I’ll take inventory here and get started on a few lists before Ellie gets home. Oh, and dinner... what time is that?”

“Six most days, if that works for you.”

She smiles wide and bright, bouncing up onto the tips of her toes, her breasts jiggling again. “Of course. I’ll have everything ready for you. Don’t worry about a thing.”

I need to get the hell out of here before I have any other impure thoughts and accidentally do or say something I’ll regret.

“Thanks.” I stand and step back into the kitchen, away from the sin that’s calling me, and toward the escape hatch. “I appreciate you bein’ here. It’s really good to have someone caring for Ellie that I trust.” With that, I wink and step outside, sucking in fresh air as though I haven’t been breathing right for the last hour.

What the fuck am I doing, studying my best friend’s daughter so perversely? I’m a fucking mess, and I need to get it together.

Chapter Three

Nora

Stay calm. Breathe. In and out. Out and in.

He winked. It could’ve been a reflex. It could’ve meant a million different things. Not everyone winks because they’re into someone. Some people wink playfully or... I

don't actually know why people wink.

I pull out my phone and ask Google.

'Why did my father's best friend just wink at me?'

She comes up with as little as I do, going on and on about the context of the situation. I consider writing lady Google an essay and asking for her advice, but I've only got an hour to get the house in order before Ellie gets home, and I don't want to fail at my first day on the job—even if it is late notice to start.

It would be far too embarrassing to fail in front of Colton. I need him to know how capable I am at taking care of his daughter and his home. I need him to know what a good partner I'd make, how good I'd be at making him a warm meal, and—

No! My internal voice gets louder. Why, Nora? Why do you need him to know you're capable? It's not because you're looking for a promotion. Well, technically it is because you'd like a promotion. Promotion to his wife. It's because you want him to dick you down.

Stop! I need to stop!

I open the fridge door and take note of how little is inside. Aside from condiments, a few drinks, and a bag of apples, there's nothing of much use. The freezer and the pantry are the same way.

What the heck have these two been eating? I add making a menu for tonight's dinner to the list of things I need to accomplish as I make my way through the old farmhouse to check for things that need to be done. After seeing the state of the food, I expect the rest of the house to be neglected as well, but it's pretty clean. Toys are put away in a box next to the fireplace, and pillows are neatly set on the couch. There are even

photos on the mantle of Ellie and Colton at the beach with wide smiles and bright eyes as they throw a stick for Blue Bell.

I'm desperate to ask him what happened between him and Ellie's mom, but I don't want to pry. My parents never talked about it, and I'm sure if my sister knew, she'd have told me. Maybe his wife died.

Probably not. If she'd have died, he'd have pictures of her everywhere. There's no sign of a woman in this house at all, not even a girlfriend. Then again, maybe he's seeing someone who doesn't feel the need to redecorate his home.

I need to get these questions and that wink out of my head. It's none of my business. Not now, not ever.

The floors creak as I step onto the first step of the staircase and follow my way up, holding the wooden banister. It's here that the old farmhouse begins to show its age with worn, floral wallpaper and dust settled onto the frames. The pictures are of people I don't recognize. Still no women that would fit the description of a woman Colton would've been married to. The one woman on the wall is short with dark gray hair spun in tight curls and the picture is in black and white. I'm guessing it's his grandmother, or maybe his mom. It's hard to say.

Upstairs, there are four bedrooms sprawled down a long hallway with tall white doors. I only open the doors I was told about, though I'd love to go through each room and find as much information as I can. To the left is Ellie's space. She's decorated with unicorns and rainbows, and aside from the stuffed animals strewn everywhere, the place is clean. Truthfully, aside from caring for Ellie and cooking meals, I'm not sure what this place really needs. For a single father running a farm, this guy is doing well for himself. I expected a train wreck.

Page 4

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

I close the door to Ellie's room and turn right into the space I was told was for me. The door springs open and a rush of cool air hits me in the face with the soft scent of citrus and wildflowers. The bed is made up with an olive green quilt, and there's a side table with a dim lamp and a vase of daisies. I get the feeling Colton knew all along I'd be staying tonight.

My heart squeezes and my chest does the flipping-flop thing again as I add that thought to the way he looked at me at the kitchen table. His gaze rose and held with mine for a solid second before he looked away, seemingly flustered. We were only talking about where I'd sleep. If he didn't think of me like that, would he have been nervous?

My phone comes to life in my pocket. It's my sister. I need to tell her tonight is off. It's for good reason, but I feel a little guilty ditching her, considering her overall mental state lately. She's really been struggling since her divorce, and I think she liked the extra company the last few days.

"Hey... how's your morning going?"

She drags in a deep breath and lets it out slowly. "Just finished with my ads. I'm babysitting the new guy for a bit to see if he can handle the tech board before I head home. How'd the interview go?"

"I got the job! It started like twenty minutes ago. Can we take a rain check on tonight?"

"Of course. I've got research to do for tomorrow's show, anyway. Did you manage to

keep it in your pants, or have you made giant, life altering mistakes already?” She laughs after her statement. “You know you could call into the show, and I could give you some official advice.”

I laugh. “Official? Are you sure? Last week you went on for ten minutes about the color of the gazebo on Main Street.”

“It’s purple. There should never be a purple gazebo... anywhere.” I can almost hear her eyes roll. “Anyway, have you’ve kept your panties on or not?”

“Yes, panties are still in place. I’m taking inventory of the house right now. He made a room up for me and picked me flowers from the field.”

“Don’t read into it. Maybe Ellie picked the flowers.”

“Why do you feel the need to crush my fantasies?”

“Umm... because this one needs to be crushed, little sister. Sorry!” The buzz of a radio hums in the background.

“Do you know what happened to his wife, ex-wife, girlfriend, or... baby mama, whatever? I don’t remember hearing anything about her.”

“Does it matter? You’re just there to work.” An alarm goes off in the background and she sighs. “Ugh, I gotta run. The new guy hit the wrong button and pulled the next show off air. Small town radio. I’ll call you in the morning. Be good!”

The line disconnects and I go back to studying the thoughtfully designed bedroom. I hadn’t seen the rocking chair and stack of books until now. Why would he go to all this trouble for someone he wasn’t into? Then again, why would he be into me?

I need to knock this off.

“Excuse me?” a soft feminine voice echoes in behind me.

I turn back quickly to see a woman about my age with long blonde hair in perfect ringlets. I’ve never been attracted to women, but I’m not sure I need to be to appreciate how drop dead insanely gorgeous this girl is. Her nose is a perfect button, her eyes are bright greenish blue, and her skin is like porcelain. It’s hard to look away from her.

“Yeah, hi. Umm... I’m sorry. Should I know you?”

“Oh, sorry. No. I, ugh,” she holds out a perfectly manicured hand with pretty French tip nails, “I’m Brittney. I’m Becca’s mom. Nora’s been at my house this morning. I dropped off some lunch, and I thought I’d come inside and say hi to the new nanny.”

She brought him lunch? Isn’t that nice?

“I’m Nora.” I notice I’m still holding her hand, so I release it quickly. I’m not sure I’ve ever felt uglier in my life. “Started today.”

“That’s what Colty said.”

Colty?

“I kept telling him he didn’t need a nanny. I’ve got so much time on my hands since my husband left, I’d have been happy to help him out.” She lands her tiny hand against her tiny hip.

How the hell did this woman have a husband and a child already? She’s young. She’s my age, maybe a year or two older. Also, I’m pretty sure she’s posturing right now.

“Well, he’s close friends with my dad. So,” I shake my head back and forth, trying not to overthink this very over thinkable situation, “I guess he figured I knew Ellie already.”

The woman smiles and pushes back her long hair. “That’s cute. Well, the kids are playing downstairs, so I’ll get out of your hair. I also left a meal in the fridge for dinner. I’ve been dropping meals off for Colty lately. He’s so overwhelmed. The man is a saint.”

Why do I feel possessive over him? Why do I want to grab this woman by her hair, drag her down the stairs, and toss her into the street? I’m not a violent person. At least I wasn’t until right now.

Page 5

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

‘Colty’ isn’t mine. He’s the furthest thing from mine. He’s literally my father’s best friend and my employer. He’s a lot of things, but being mine is not one of them.

“That’s nice of you. I’m sure he appreciated all the help.” God, I wish my mother hadn’t raised me to be so damn polite.

The blonde smiles, showing off bright white teeth. “Oh, Ellie’s schedule! Did Colty go over that yet?” If this woman calls the man ‘Colty’ one more time, I’m going to blow. “I made a schedule last month for them to follow. I put it on the fridge downstairs. I thought it would help him keep track of her playdates and doctor’s appointments with all the school stuff coming up. The only thing you really need to remember is that Ellie is deathly afraid of the drain in the bathtub. I have to cover it before she’ll get in.”

“You help out with bath time, too?” Why did I ask that question? I’m trying to get her to leave.

“Oh, yeah. I’ve stayed over a few nights here and there to help out.”

And... they’re fucking. Awesome! Ugh, of course he’s fucking her. Look at her! What single man wouldn’t be interested in her?

Dreams officially crushed. Maybe it’s for the best.

“Well,” my tone rises, “I appreciate all the help. I should probably get downstairs to see Ellie. It was nice meeting you.”

She smiles and turns down the hall, walking beside me. “It was great meeting you, too. Ya know, I could stay for a bit, just to help get you acclimated to the house and everything.”

“That’s not necessary. I’m totally fine here on my own. I actually think it’s good for Ellie to get some—”

“I insist,” she presses as we hop down the last step into the kitchen, where the kids are eating a snack. “Besides, I’d love to get to know you better. We’re going to be spending lots of time together.”

The words hang in the air like a razor-sharp warning. And as her lips curl up into a smile, I feel the ire beneath the surface. The truth that’s now exposed. The wildest, most irrational thought another human being could ever have, especially a human being that looks like this one. She wants Colton, and for some insane reason, believes I’m a threat.

Chapter Four

Colton

It’s nearly six thirty before I finish up with the tractor and head into the house. I needed to change out the alternator but found a leaky hose and a clogged filter, so the job took twice as long to finish... as with most things out here.

What I didn’t expect to see is Britney’s car still parked in the driveway. I knew she was dropping Ellie off, but she should’ve left hours ago.

“Colty!” she announces in a high-pitched squeal the second I step into the house. “I was getting worried about you.”

I hate it when she calls me Colty. I have no fucking clue where she picked that up from, but it's annoying as hell.

She's walking toward me, arms outstretched for a hug, but my eyes are on Nora, who's sat on the living room floor putting together a puzzle with Ellie.

"I brought my famous lasagna and some garlic bread. It's your favorite."

I lean down to fumble with my boots, avoiding the hug she offers. The woman is trying to be nice, but lately it's gone too far. "Thanks, but I'm really tired tonight. I think I might skip dinner and head up to bed." This is a lie to get her out of the house. I'd flat out tell her to leave if I didn't think I'd have every church bitty flaming me on Sunday for being rude. It's a small town. People's judgments spread fast.

"Skip dinner? You can't skip dinner. A big, hardworking man like you?" Her hand lands on my bicep. "You need to keep your body fueled. Come on and sit down." She sets the plate of food on the table, and Nora stands from the ground, Ellie's hand in hers.

"She's right. You should eat." Her tone is softer than earlier. I hope Britney hasn't messed with her. I would've come up to the house had I seen her car still parked in the driveway.

"Daddy!" Ellie jumps up and wraps her short little arms around my neck. "Nora and I put together the kitten puzzle, she braided my hair, and we talked about my unicorns, and I showed her my favorite stuffies!"

"Wow," I glance toward Nora, who's distracted by glasses being filled at the dining room table. I know I hired her to do these things, but for some reason, I don't want her worrying about it. I want her sitting next to me, telling me about her day while someone else waits on the both of us. "That's a good day you've had, bug. Did you

have fun playing with Becca? Where is Becca?"

"Oh, she had ballet tonight. I had my sister take her so I could stay here and visit with you two." Britney sets the final plate onto the table and takes the seat beside me. "And don't tell me it wasn't necessary," she lands her hand on top of mine, but I pull it back a moment later, "I wanted to do it. It's important I'm here to let the new nanny know all the details of the house."

"She's more than a nanny." I clear my throat and glare toward Nora, who's sat on the far end of the table next to Ellie. "She's a... close friend of the family." She's also all I thought about all day long, and the fact that Britney is here ruining the second half of my day is pissing me off. I'd been looking forward to alone time with Nora since this morning. "Besides, I have to cook for my two favorite farmers. I know what you like after a long day."

Ellie leans into her plate and sniffs her fork. "It smells funny."

"Ellie," Nora leans into her ear and whispers low, but I hear her just fine, "that's not polite. Britney made us a nice meal."

"Yeah," Ellie glances toward Britney, "but it smells bad."

Page 6

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“What are you talking about, Ellie? You and your dad love my lasagna.”

“No, we don’t. Dad says it smells like cow poop.”

I bite back a grin. Did I say that out loud? “Ellie, that’s enough.”

Britney turns toward me, her brows narrowed harshly. “Do you not like my lasagna, Colty?”

“It’s good. Thank you for making it for us. Ellie, apologize to Britney, please.”

“But Dad, you said it—”

“Ellie, apologize.”

Ellie’s big brown eyes roll sideways. “Sorry, Britney.”

“That’s okay, Ellie. Why don’t you tell me what your favorite meal is, and I’ll make that for you next time.”

“Actually,” I interrupt, “we appreciate your help, but that’s what Nora is here for. I’d like her to cook our meals and take care of things around the house.”

“Yeah, I’m not sure why you needed to pay someone. I—” Her phone rings, and she glances down at the screen, reading over the text while trying to finish her thought. “Shoot, that’s my sister. Becca fell at dance class and she’s asking to go home. No damage, but she’s begging for me. I should go.” She stands from the table, scrapes

her plate of food into the trash, and turns back toward me. “I can bring her back here if you want to sit out on the porch tonight and have a few drinks.”

We’ve never sat on the porch for drinks, so I don’t know what this is about. “No, thank you. Like I said, I’m pretty tired. Keep us in the loop about Becca, though. I hope everything is okay.”

She leans down for a hug which I didn’t request, and I move back in time to avoid an incoming kiss on the cheek. She’s never done that before either, but I see now what she’s doing. “I’ll call you. Great to meet you, Nora. Good night, Ellie.”

Ellie is too busy talking to Nora to say goodbye, so I say it for her. “Thank you again. Have a good night.”

Britney nods and heads out the door, slamming the screen shut behind her.

“Can we order pizza?” Ellie pushes away her plate. “I know you said this tastes bad, Dad. I heard you say it.” I’m going to have to be more careful about what I say in front of Ellie. She’s getting older now.

“Yes, we can order pizza.” I grab my phone out of my back pocket and glance toward Nora as I place the text order. “What do you like?”

“What? Britney made this nice meal. We should eat it.”

“She tries,” I sigh, “but it’s pretty awful. Wouldn’t you agree?”

Nora hesitates on her answer, pushing back a strand of hair before saying, “I like anything but onions.”

“Okay, all set. Ellie, why don’t you go get your shower started. By the time it’s done,

dinner will be here.” I expect her to fight me back given the whole drain situation we’ve been dealing with.

“Okay!” She bounces up from the table and runs up the stairs. “Nora sprinkled unicorn dust in the shower so I’m not afraid of the drain anymore. Unicorn dust scares monsters away from drains.”

“Damn,” I stand from the dining room table and grab two beers from the fridge, popping the caps before handing one to Nora, “you’ve solved something I’ve been working on for months, and you’ve only been here a few hours. Care to sit out on the porch with me?”

“Are you sure? It’s been a long day. I don’t want to—”

“I’m positive. I need some adult conversation.”

Nodding, she stands from the table, taking the beer from my hand, our fingertips grazing one another. A shot of electricity I haven’t felt in ages goes rushing up the back of my neck and down again.

“Sorry about Britney.” I hold the screen door open and pass by the first rocker to settle in the second. “She’s a lot.”

The crickets are loud tonight, and the air is heavy like it’s about to rain.

“Oh, yeah... it’s no big deal. She seems nice.”

I have a feeling Nora would be polite to anyone.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“She’s... I think she wants something more than friendship.”

“Yeah?” Nora clears her throat. “She’s gorgeous. You two would be cute together. Plus, she’s got a kid near Ellie’s age which would be good, right?”

I laugh. “Britney is not gorgeous. She’s fake and over the top. I’ve told her to stop with the meals and the visits multiple times, but Becca is Ellie’s best friend, so it’s an awkward situation.”

Nora stares toward me for a long moment, her mouth open slightly as though something is on her mind, but she doesn’t say any of it.

“What’s up? Did she do something weird?”

“No. She just told me about Ellie’s schedule and how she made meals sometimes for you guys, that you all played with the girls together, and oh... she mentioned how she slept over a few times.”

I wet my lips and rock the chair back. “She tell you I wasn’t here for that?”

“What do you mean?”

“She stayed over with Ellie when I went out of town to get some horses that were needing rescue. It was a last-minute thing,” I laugh, “but she made it sound like she’d stayed with me, didn’t she?”

Nora wets her big red lips and nods. “Yeah, which is fine. I don’t need an

explanation. It's your life, and I mean..."

I drag in a deep breath and let it out slowly. "I know. I just wanted you to know where I stand."

"What is your favorite meal?"

"Lasagna, but not like that," I laugh. "My grandma used to make this one version. I don't know what was in it. I've tried recreating it dozens of times, but it never turns out like hers."

Nora nods slowly before taking a sip of beer. The wind blows her hair back and the song of crickets begins to quiet around us. "When I was little, my sister used to take me to this baking class with her. We learned all about different spices, but I never do much cooking. Damn it. I probably shouldn't have told that story given you brought me here to cook."

"Ha, well, anything is better than that lasagna Britney makes. It's dry, and she uses some kind of seasoning that's just awful."

We sit silently rocking back and forth in the breeze, watching the fern leaves blow and the horses graze in the early evening light. I shouldn't be thinking about how to get my hand brushing against hers again, or how to sit closer to her, or how to breathe her in, but the thoughts are running through my head like an obsession.

I need to shift my focus.

"Did Ellie ask you anything weird today?"

"Weird? Weird how?"

“About her mother? She’s been asking more questions lately, and I thought maybe she’d have tried you out.”

“No, nothing. Is there something I should know?”

As I think about what to say next, headlights beam up the driveway. There aren’t many places that deliver up here, but this pizza place promises to go anywhere on the mountain. I believe that advertising has gotten them into trouble a time or two.

I glance toward Nora. “Maybe we can talk again after dinner. That is if you’re interested.”

Her round face lights, and she smiles sweetly. “I’d love that.”

“Perfect. It’s a date.”

Write that under things I never should’ve said.

Chapter Five

Nora

He used the word ‘date.’ He actually used the word, date.

My heart beats heavy as I try not to read into it, though I’m not sure who wouldn’t. It’s a word used for people to read into. He could’ve used a plethora of words.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

Talk. Drink. Hangout.

He used 'date.'

I need to call Daphne. I'm sure she'd have some solid advice to set me back in place again.

I'll call her after dinner... before the date.

Ellie bites into her pizza, pulling the crust away with a stringy piece of cheese hanging from her mouth. "This is so much better than cow poop."

Colton laughs, and I get the feeling this is their dynamic, which I have no plan on disrupting. I can't imagine how hard it's been raising a little girl without her mother.

"So, what are you two going to do tomorrow?" Colton takes a sip of beer and settles the bottle onto the table.

"Nora says we're going to see how much longer until the new playground is done at Mrs. Robinson's house." She bites into her pizza again, before taking a sip of water.

"That sounds like a fun day. I think they're still working on it, but I want to say a slide was finally up. Take pictures for me."

Ellie continues, "Then, we're restocking the house with food, and we're gonna learn how to make the cheesy noodles I had at that restaurant."

“Alfredo?” Colton grins toward me, brushing his hand down over his beard before tossing his napkin down onto his empty plate. “That sounds delicious. I’m sure you two will do great.”

“And... apple pie for dessert, ‘cause that’s my favorite. I told Nora your favorite is raspberry, but we’re gonna make my favorite first.”

“Okay...” The lines beside his eyes wrinkle as he holds his gaze on mine. I wonder if I have something on my face, or basil in my teeth, or if my mascara is smudged all over my eyes. With my luck, it’s all three. “I was hoping you two would have time for lunch tomorrow. I’ve got a few colts to feed and normal chores, but I should have time for a picnic.”

“Oh,” my tone brightens with excitement, “we could definitely meet you down in the pasture for lunch. I planned to get an early start, anyway.”

“Yes! We can show Nora all the pretty horses, and I can show her how to braid their hair, and I can show her my kingdom!” Ellie shouts and jumps up from the table.

“Are you finished eating after one piece, bug?” Colton flips the pizza box open and wiggles his eyebrow toward Ellie.

“Yeah, I’m tired.”

“Tired?” Colton’s voice draws deeper as he says, “I’ve never heard you admit that to anyone. You feeling okay?”

Ellie grins wide, twisting her curls. “Nora says that I’m a unicorn princess, and a princess needs eight hours of sleep every night so their powers are their strongest.”

“Oh yeah?” Colton glances toward me. “What’s your superpower?”

“Unstoppable energy!” The announcement comes straight from her chest as she hops up from the table and runs toward the stairs.

Colton smiles at Ellie then toward me. “That’s very perceptive of Nora to notice that, and I agree, sleep is the best way to keep those powers fresh and strong. You better go brush those teeth. I’ll be up to tuck you in shortly.”

“Okay. Good night, Nora.” She runs up the stairs, one foot after the other, as my heart expands and warms. I shouldn’t imagine what it would be like to be a part of this family because I’m not and never will be. I definitely shouldn’t fantasize about Colton and I disappearing into his bedroom after dinner. He didn’t mess with the hot mom, so he’s certainly not going to mess with me.

“I’ve got this, if you want to head up and get ready for bed too. Your day has been long.”

“Umm, thanks, but you’re paying me to clean up and take care of things, so why don’t you get cleaned up and I’ll do this.”

“It’s a pizza box and a few glasses. Let me feel like the hero tonight.” He smiles that big, gorgeous grin that he smiles, and stretches up from the table. “We can talk after we get comfortable and put Ellie to bed. Does that work?”

Getting comfortable with him wasn’t something I anticipated. In fact, I don’t have a change of clothes. “Oh, shoot. I wasn’t expecting to start on the spot like this today. I didn’t bring anything from home to wear.”

“Damn. I’m sorry. I should’ve thought of that. If you want to go upstairs in my room, the second drawer of the dresser has some t-shirts of mine you can wear. I’ve got extra toothbrushes in the bathroom next to your room.”

His t-shirt. He wants me to wear his t-shirt... to our date. This is going to my head. I need my sister.

“Okay,” I say, my voice cracking as I turn. God, I need to get a grip. It’s not a big deal. It’s fabric. It’s just washed fabric. “I’ll meet you in Ellie’s room in five.”

Page 9

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“Sounds good,” he groans, opening the front door with the pizza box in hand.

Lord, help me. I shouldn't be here. I really shouldn't be here. Ellie is sweet as heck and I love spending time with her, but today was an emotional roller coaster, and I fear every day from here on out will be as well. I'm going to have to stop overthinking every single word and glance.

But how? How do I do that when I'm desperately searching for the smallest sign that he might like me?

I push open Colton's bedroom door, and my thighs squeeze together. The whole room smells like him. Cedar, pine, and something deeper like diesel in the background. He's made his bed fairly neatly and one single pillow sits on the left side with a nightstand. The space is decorated with pictures that Ellie's drawn in frames. I can't fathom how this man is still alone. A big, hot, girl dad. I mean, that's kind of catnip for women.

I open the second drawer to the dresser and pull out the first t-shirt I see. It has some kind of tractor on it. I've never touched a tractor in my life, but I already love this thing.

I can't imagine the look on my father's face if he knew the dirty, filthy things I was thinking about his friend right now. It's so messed up, but I'd give just about anything to have one night with Colton.

Pulling off my dress, I replace it with the oversized tee, but it's uncomfortable, and my back is aching from wearing this stupid bra all day.

Maybe I should take it off.

Maybe I should give Colton something to look at. Maybe give him reason to say more words I can hyper-analyze later.

I mean, I'll know in the next three minutes if he's into me or not. This t-shirt is thin... and my nipples are hard.

As my fingers unclasp the bra, a sense of panic sets in. This has to stop. I'm not here to seduce Colton. I'm here to take care of his daughter. I'm here for money. I'm here as a favor to my father.

"I'm ready!" Ellie shouts as Colton's heavy weight climbs up the steps.

"We're on our way." His voice is so deep and graveled that I feel another twinge between my legs.

Get a grip, Nora! You're the nanny, not a prostitute. Though, right now, I'm kind of wishing I was the prostitute.

I tuck my clothes under my arm and tip toe out of his bedroom with the plan to escape to my room before he sees me without my bra on, but there he is gruff and tall, staring toward me.

Actually, isn't this what I just said I wanted?

"Oh, damn." His arm brushes against mine and his eyes glance to my chest and up again quickly as though he's trying not to look. "Sorry... I didn't mean to... bump into you."

"No. It's okay. I'm good." Am I really, though?

We walk side by side toward Ellie's room, the tension hot between us. Then again, maybe I'm the only one feeling it.

"You're here!" Ellie climbs under her covers. "Good thing. It's late."

"Which story did you pick tonight?" Colton makes a B-line for her bookshelf as though this is the routine they have every night.

"Dad, it's already ten minutes past bedtime. If I want my powers to be strong in the morning, I need to get to sleep." She snuggles under her covers and stares at us. "Come on... kisses!"

Colton bends down and sweeps her hair back, kissing her head gently. "Love you, bug. Sweet dreams."

"I need a hug from Ellie, too!"

The warmth is back again as I lean down and hug her tight. I can't disappoint her. She's already lost her mother. I need to get my head out of the gutter and back into reality where actual things happen, not whatever fantasies I'm dreaming about.

"See you guys in the morning. You should get to sleep too so your powers are their strongest. Dad's power is definitely strength. I saw him lift a whole horse last week."

"I lifted a horse last week?" Colton laughs, "I must have forgotten that one."

"You did, Dad. You lifted Tiger."

"Oh, the foal. Yes, I did lift the foal, didn't I." He grins. "What's Nora's power?"

Ellie lands her hand on her chin and looks away as though she's thinking. "Nora's

power is... kindness, because she listened to me and helped me all day today. Plus, she makes you smile too, Dad.”

Page 10

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

Colton glances toward me and my heart slams against my chest. “I’d agree with that. She’s very kind.”

“Thank you both. Good night, Ellie. I can’t wait to spend the day with you tomorrow.”

“Same.” She rolls over and cuddles her unicorn as Colton flicks off the light.

When the door is closed and we’re down the hall, he leans into me, bringing with him the scent of all the hard work he’s done today. Maybe some women would be repulsed, but there’s some kind of pheromone dripping off him that leaves me desperate to climb all over him. “I’m going to need to up your pay already.”

I grin. “Why’s that?”

“You’ve broken her fear of the drain, gotten her excited about bed, and gave her something to feel good about. I think that’s above and beyond what I was expecting. Thank you.”

“Oh, she’s great. I’ve always loved Ellie.”

He nods slowly as we stand on the top of the stairway. “I’m gonna get cleaned up. I’ll be down in five.” He turns toward his bedroom, but glances back slowly. “That t-shirt is one of my favorites.”

“Oh, I can change. I—”

“No, it suits you. I’ll be down in five. There’s a carton of ice cream in the freezer. We can share.”

I consider heading back to my room to slide my bra back on, but I liked the way he was looking at me, and I want more. Plus, I’m pretty sure ‘it suits you’ can go in the lexicon of words I get to analyze later.

I turn off the overhead light in the kitchen and twist on the lamp in the attached living room. It’s a dimmer light for this kind of night, which is easier on the eyes...or I’m inadvertently setting the mood.

I grab the cookie dough ice cream from the freezer to defrost a little before Colton gets back downstairs. As I wait, I pull my phone from my pocket with intentions to text my sister, but instead see a barrage of texts.

Dad: How’s the first day going?

Dad: Don’t let him work you too hard.

Dad: I just stopped by the pie shop. They have that new butterbeer pie you were looking forward to. I’ll stop by Colton’s with a slice on my way back from your sister’s place tonight. Let me know if eight works.

I have been looking forward to that new Harry Potter themed pie, but no, eight doesn’t work. I’ll have to stop and get a slice for myself.

The lamp flicks off, and Colton lands his heavy feet on the hardwood floor of the kitchen before turning on the brighter overhead light.

What the hell?

He's wearing a pair of boxer briefs and a tight white t-shirt that shows everything and anything a woman could ever want to see. Okay, I guess a brighter light can be good too.

I drop my phone onto the table and check my chin for drool. "Oh, ugh, one scoop or two?"

He grins. "I say we take two spoons and eat it right out of the carton. Calories don't count unless they're in a bowl."

My clit throbs. I pretend it's about the calories not counting comment, but I fear the throbbing has more to do with the outline of his massive cock. God, I need help. "Oh, that sounds good."

He grabs two spoons from the drawer next to the dishwasher and sits at the dining room table before pushing the chair next to him out for me. "I meant what I said a few minutes ago. I'm happy you're here. Ellie hasn't responded to anyone like this."

"I'm glad I can help."

How am I going to focus knowing his cock is that big? I mean sure, I only saw the outline, but that was more than enough.

He shovels his spoon into the carton and stares toward me. "Lately, she's been asking about her mom, and it's gotten complicated."

"What happened?" I dig into the ice cream as well, fishing out a bite of cookie dough.

"I'm surprised your dad hasn't told you."

"No, he never said a word."

Page 11

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

He shrugs and rolls his big shoulders back with a sigh. “I don’t know how much to tell her or if I should tell her anything at all. She’s everything to me, and now that she’s starting to make friends and see all the other kids have moms... it’s hard.”

“What happened?” I twist my spoon back into the carton of cream as I hold my breath in anticipation. I can’t imagine why anyone would ever leave this man or Ellie. They’re perfect, and so is this ranch. Who would throw all of this away?

“Her mom was a woman I met a little over five years ago. We didn’t know each other well. She was an artist, a painter who was in town sketching the mountain range. We connected for the weekend, but she was ready for her next adventure, and I didn’t hear another thing from her until nine months later when she called to tell me I had a daughter.” He swallows down a bite of cookie dough. “Anyway, we did the DNA testing, and sure enough, Ellie was mine.”

“So, why isn’t she here?”

“She couldn’t handle staying in one place or caring for a child, so she signed over full custody and agreed never to come back again. I didn’t want to take a chance of her messing up Ellie in the future. Last year, around Christmas time, I heard that she’d passed away. Some kind of ski accident.”

“Oh my God, I’m so sorry.”

“It’s sad. I feel bad things ended the way they did, but when she snuck away after that weekend without even a call, I knew that she was never going to be a stable presence in mine or our daughter’s life. I’m glad she was wise enough to give Ellie to me when

she did. I can't imagine where Ellie would be now if she hadn't."

So much of this makes sense now.

"So, you've been alone with Ellie this whole time, since she was an infant?"

"Six months old." He shrugs. "We just made it work."

"What about the chores? How'd you manage all that with a baby?"

"I brought her down there in her stroller and kept her close. When she started walking, I made a pen in the yard. She played, and I worked."

My God, this man is hot as hell. "That's pretty incredible. Most guys would've probably put the baby up for adoption, not that there's anything wrong with that. I just... that's a lot of work you took on."

"Well, I love her. I'm glad she's here. I wish I could still make everything work but she needs a woman in her life, too."

"Yeah." I look down at the carton and grab another spoonful. "Well, I hope you find her. I know yo—"

"I'm pretty sure I did. I mean, you proved that today. She needs you in her life." He laughs. "No pressure. I'm not tying you to the house or anything. I'm just saying you're special, and you got here just in time."

Okay, I'm going to die now. Tell me how a person doesn't read into that.

His hand reaches toward mine and lands over the top of it, brushing softly. "Ellie's right. Your superpower is kindness."

My clit throbs harder and harder as our eyes stay focused on one another. I'm crazy. This doesn't mean anything. Telling someone they're kind is just a friendly, nice thing to say. I'm sure he tells loads of women that they're kind.

But does he say it in his underwear, at his kitchen table, while they're wearing his favorite t-shirt?

What the hell is happening? Why do I want to lean in and kiss him? Why does he look like he's thinking about kissing me?

Send help!

"Jesus," he groans under his breath before breaking the spell. "Sorry... I got lost for a second there."

"Yeah," I sigh, standing from the table to set my spoon in the kitchen sink. When I turn back, he's kneading the back of his neck, staring again. "You okay?"

"Oh," he glances down at the table and rolls his head to the side, "I fucked my neck up today bending over the tractor."

"It's probably your suboccipital. I can work it out for you." God, my voice probably sounded way too excited to offer that.

"No, that's not in your job description. I'll be okay. It happens all the time." He continues kneading the back of his neck, rolling it back and forth.

"You're probably doing more damage rolling it that way." I stand behind him, landing my hands on the back of his strong, solid shoulders. "Can I try and work it out?"

He groans low in his throat as my hand rubs the tight muscles at the base of his skull.
“You sure? It’s been a long day.”

“Yeah,” I say, my voice cracking. “I’m sure.”

Page 12

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“Damn,” he grunts, leaning forward and resting his head on his bent hand. “That feels good.”

The back of his neck is warm, and I can tell right away where the pain is coming from. I move my hands on his shoulders and rub slowly, scratching my fingers up through his hair and onto his neck to relax the muscles surrounding the knot.

He groans under his breath. “Right there.”

Oh shit.

I dig into the knot with more pressure and flatten my thumbs to loosen the cords in his neck as I try to keep myself from salivating, though it’s not working. Currently, my clit is throbbing, and my rock-hard nipples are brushing up against his back as I lean into him. I’ve never noticed this with any other clients. Only this one.

“Shit,” he bends up from the table and stands, abruptly stopping the massage, “that felt really great.”

I swallow hard, noticing the unmistakable bulge in his jeans.

Oh God.

I glance away, my eyes wide. Too wide. I need to be cool. He’s not hard. He can’t be hard.

I glance back. Why did I glance back?

He's hard!

"I can't take and not give anything back." He pulls out the dining room chair. "Sit down."

"What? It's okay... I'm good."

"I'm sure you are, but I'd feel weird if I took a massage and didn't give one back. Go ahead and sit."

I'm pretty sure I could come just thinking about this man touching me. I'm not sure how my body is going to respond to his big, calloused hands. That said, there's no way in hell I'm saying no.

I slide into the chair and lean forward, resting my head in my hands as his big, rough hands dig into the back of my neck. Right away, I feel his strength. His fingers are thick, and his grip exudes power and steadiness. The pads of his fingers are rough, reminding me of the years of hard work and silent challenges they've overcome. His thumb brushes the space behind the lobe of my ear. It's an unexpected tenderness that sends a chill down my spine.

Softly, a sigh leaves my lips without permission, and he tilts my head to the side, cradling the weight of my skull in his hardened palm as he works one side of my neck and then the other.

"Feel good?" His voice is deep but quiet.

"Yeah," I whisper. "I can't remember the last time I was on the receiving end of this."

"It's about time then." He spreads his fingers through my hair, massaging my scalp.

“You smell good, like flowers.”

“Thanks,” I squeak, barely alive. “You feel amazing.”

“You’re much better at this than me. I’m just... going with the flow.”

I moan under my breath as his hand catches a particularly tight muscle at the base of my neck.

“Good girl. Relax for me.”

Hold up. Did he just call me a good girl?

My body stiffens and my heart rate flies at the speed of light until I melt into some state of being that I didn’t know existed until right now. I’m pretty sure he feels it too. He feels me thawing. He feels my body giving into him. He has to. How else could I explain why he grips the back of my neck and turns me toward him? How else do I explain why he settles me on to the dining room table and leans into my lips with a growl low in his throat? How else do I explain the way he tears off the t-shirt I’m wearing, or the way he cups my breasts and licks each nipple? How else do I explain his teeth scraping against them?

My entire body is on fire. I’m not here anymore. I don’t know this girl. I don’t know her at all. My hands wrap around his strong shoulders, and my fingers weave through the tuft of hair on his chest.

We shouldn’t be doing this. I know damn well we shouldn’t be doing this. There are so many consequences. My father. Ellie. Everyone in town. I couldn’t handle it.

Also, I can’t stop.

He kisses my neck with a growl. “I think about you constantly, Nora.”

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

My panties are soaked. “You do?”

“I do.”

“What do you think?” Clearly, I know what he thinks, but I need to hear it. I need to hear his gruff voice whisper filthy things in my ear.

He brushes my hair back away from my face and leans his forehead against mine. “I shouldn’t tell you all the things I think. If I do, you’ll want to leave. Hell, you probably shouldn’t be here, anyway. Clearly, I can’t control myself.”

“I want to be here,” I murmur as I tug at his boxers. “I think about you too.”

“What do you think?”

My eyes meet his. “I asked you first.”

A low growl emanates from his throat as he wets his lips and leans into my ear. “Oh, honey, I think about all kinds of things. Your soft hair in my hands, your pretty smile, what you’d look like on your knees, my cock sliding into your throat. My thoughts are all over the fuckin’ place. Your turn.” His lips meet mine gently, then deeper until our tongues are twisting together and he’s groaning into my mouth.

“I, ugh,” I take a breath, “I wonder what your hands would feel like on my skin, which tractor you’d bend me over first, what your cock would feel like spreading me wide.”

Oh my God, I've never talked this dirty in my life! What am I saying? Why am I saying it to my father's best friend?

My cheeks heat and a wave of dizziness washes over me.

"Jesus," he growls into my mouth, kissing me deep and hard before pulling away with a less satisfying growl. This one is angry. "What the fuck am I doing? We can't do this. You're twenty years younger than me. I just hired you for employment, and Ellie needs you. I'm complicating this. Not to mention your dad..."

"Why does this need to be complicated?" I hop down off the table, my nude body on display like I've never had an insecurity in my life, and Lord knows that isn't true. "This doesn't have to be forever, Colton. There's no contract to sign. We don't have to tell my father, and we don't have to make this more complicated than it needs to be. Just one night, you and me. We can forget about everyone else, and just let this happen."

"That won't work, honey." He steps toward me, his hand weaving into my hair as he presses my bare chest against him. "I can't take you once and not want you again and again. It's impossible."

"Can you really walk away from tonight and not regret it?"

Silence ensues as he studies my face, looking over me as though he's weighing out the level of pain this is about to cause.

Without warning, he crashes against my lips and lifts me back up onto the dining room table with a growl. "If I only get you for one night, I need you to promise you'll be a good girl and do what I say."

My heart slams against my chest with anticipation. "Okay, but you have to promise

me this is really a one-night thing. We can't do this ever again."

He sweeps his hand down over my face. "I can't promise that." His lips land on my neck and he kisses me over and over. "How could I? You're here every day. You're taking care of us. You're... I need you."

"One night, Colton. It's all we've got. Can we agree or should I leave?" I don't know if I have the power to leave, but pretending like I do makes me feel like a better person. Like somehow, if I only fuck my dad's best friend one night, I'm not as bad as I could be.

"One night at a time," he groans licking each nipple gently. "I'll take you one night at a time."

Chapter Six

Colton

If someone had told me that today would end with Nora on the kitchen table naked, I'd never have believed it. Yet here we are, both of us nude, pressed against each other heaving while a carton of cookie dough ice cream melts behind us.

The only thing I can't get behind is the concept of this being a single night event. How could I ever give this up? How could I live in a world where I have this perfect, sweet, little honey pot within reach and not claim her as my own?

Her hands move wildly all over my body as she pants, "I need you, Colton."

Jesus. I shouldn't do this. I know I shouldn't do this. She's my buddy's daughter. She's too damn young for me. She's sweet, soft, and fuck... "Get on your knees for me, honey. I need you to suck my cock."

It's a fantasy I've had for years. Her full lips on the tip of my dick before I slide deep into her throat.

Fuck!

She hops down off the table and slides onto her knees, staring up at me with big warm eyes that fill me up in ways I've never been filled.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“Good girl,” I groan as she grips my cock in her tiny hand and slides her tongue up and over my shaft. Fuck, this is happening. There’s no going back now, and I’m sure that whatever happens tonight will be worth whatever bullshit it causes.

I grip the edge of the chair and tangle my free hand in her long silky hair as her soft lips press against my cock with a sigh.

God damn it! This one-night thing is going to be embarrassingly short.

Her tongue twists around the head and sends a shiver through me as her warm, wet mouth takes me in.

“Good fuckin’ girl, honey.” I hold her head against my cock. “Keep going. Take me all the way in.” Her head moves back and forth, and with each suction, she gags a little more.

“Okay, honey. Stop or I’ll come in your throat.”

This only makes her suck harder and faster.

Damn it! There’s no stopping this train. It’s on a collision course, full speed ahead. I grip her hair and hold her down on my cock as a tingling shoots up from my toes and into my groin, spilling come into her throat as she continues to lick and suck me dry.

“Fuck, Nora. Make a mess for me. I want to see myself all over you.”

Slurping off my cock, she sticks out her tongue and stares up at me as my sticky,

white seed drips from her lips and falls onto her chin, her neck, her breasts.

This is so fucked up. I shouldn't be seeing her like this. Those dark eyes. My come covering her soft skin like lotion that needs to be rubbed in.

"You look so fuckin' good, honey." I can't stop studying her, watching her, aching for her, even though I've just come all over her pretty little face. Leaning down, I lift her from the ground and set her back on the table, spreading her legs wide before biting my way toward her dripping seam.

Moaning, she thrusts up into me, scrubbing her soft crease against my beard with need and eager anticipation. Moan after moan spills from her lips and my tongue is a wild animal without reason for pause.

I dig into her, flicking against her clit, sucking hard, breathing her in as she grips my hair and tugs at the top of my ear.

Her beautiful hair is a wild mess behind her, and her back is arched up and away from the table as she grinds against my beard, muting her sounds as not to wake Ellie. I've never felt more primal in my life. I need all of this woman, and I need her now!

"Yes," she pants, "right there. Don't stop!"

I clamp down instinctively as she moans, my body on fire for more.

Reaching up, I twist my finger against her nipple and suck the bud of her tiny little pussy into my mouth. Her pretty pink lips. Her tight little opening. I need all of her. She tastes so fucking good.

I lick her over and over again, dragging my tongue over every free space, sucking her swollen clit into my mouth with a growl.

“Oh my God, don’t stop. Please. Right there. Yes!” She’s breathless and panting, her hips rolling and digging into my face. Her breasts sway back and forth as I push her curved frame with each thrust of my tongue.

“I’m gonna come,” she pants, seconds before her body begins convulsing against my face. Her thighs squeeze my cheeks, and though I think she wants me to stop, I can’t stop licking the seam of her swollen lips.

She jumps and jerks away in the other direction, giggling, trying to escape my grasp, but I can’t let her go. “Okay, okay... stop. I—”

I torture her as she tortured me, digging into her tight little pussy, cleaning her up, tasting her, feeling her move and squirm against my face as her thighs press against my cheeks and squeeze.

“Seriously.” There’s a smile in her tone as she says, “Stop. I can’t take any more.”

I kiss the lips of her pussy and lean up, licking the seam one last time before kissing her thighs and dragging her to the edge of the table. My cock is hard, her tits are swaying, her nipples are stiff, her pussy is soaking wet, and I can’t stop thinking about all the things I’m not supposed to do.

“I need you inside of me,” she begs. “Fill me up. Please!”

“Oh, honey, I want to. Trust me. It’s only for one night, right? The trouble is... I don’t have a condom right now.”

“Yeah,” her eyes widen, “I don’t care. If I don’t feel you right now, I won’t be okay. Trust me.”

There are a million things telling me to stop, but I push past every single one of them.

Her father could find out... so be it.

Page 15

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

I could get attached and need more... already there.

She could get pregnant... I wish she would.

Her hair spreads out behind her as she stares toward me with those big, gorgeous eyes and that sweet come-get-me smile. "I need you so badly, Colton. Please."

Stroking my cock at her tight little entrance, I slide into her soft and slow, as every bit of reserve I have left leaves my body.

"Eyes on me, honey. I need to watch your pretty face as I dig into your tight, little pussy."

A moan escapes her and then another as I sink in further and take what's mine. It's a dangerous place to be. Inside of her, desperate for her, feeling her walls close in around me, tight and warm.

I grind my teeth and push in until I'm back as far as I can go.

"Oh God, Colton. I need it. I need you," she pants. "Don't stop."

I hold her legs up over my shoulders and thrust into her harder. In and out. Back and forth. Faster then slower.

Holding one hand on her ankle, I use the other to grip the thickest part of her hip as I push forward again, watching her tits move back and forth as she whimpers.

“I’m so close,” she calls out, her tone begging.

“Come on my cock like a good girl. You’ve got it. Give yourself to me.”

Her phone buzzes on the table behind her head and I glance back to see a text light up the screen.

Dad: I’ll be there in five. Turning onto the county road now.

Here? He’s coming here? Why would he come here?

What the hell am I doing? He’ll never forgive me. Hell, I’m not sure I’ll ever be able to look him in the eye ever again.

I should stop. I should pull out, we should clean up, and I should spend the next forty years in church repenting my sins...but I don’t.

I thrust deeper and harder as her body shakes and her tight little pussy clenches down around my cock. “You’re mine, honey.”

Nothing can stop this. Not now, not ever. This woman is mine and I don’t care who knows it. I’m never letting go.

Chapter Seven

Nora

I’ve never felt anything like this before. Maybe it’s in part that what we’re doing is so wrong, or maybe it has something to do with his huge cock. Then again, it could be how he uses it or the way his giant frame feels against my body. No matter the cause, I’m blinded with pleasure as an orgasm roars up through my toes and into my hips,

settling between my legs.

“Oh God, Colton! Yes!” I pant and scream in relief as I convulse against his solid, pumping frame.

“Good girl. Good fuckin’ girl.” His tone is rough, deep, and ragged as though he’s about to lose control. “I’m gonna come in this tight, little pussy.”

“Do it,” I pant, watching his face contort. “Come inside of me. Make me yours.”

I don’t know what I’m saying anymore. Tonight was supposed to be a one-night thing. We aren’t claiming anything. I’m only his for this one night. Tomorrow, everything goes back to normal, and we will have gotten all this out of our system. Tomorrow, I go back to being his nanny, and he goes back to being my father’s best friend. Tomorrow, we pretend like none of this happened, so I have no clue why I’m hollering out for him to make me his, except for the fact that, I wish I was his, that this was real, and we had plans to do this over and over again from now to the end of eternity.

He thrusts into me one final time and I watch his eyes roll back into his head before he growls out and releases inside of me. Warmth spreads into my stomach as he pumps the last of his seed inside.

“Fuck, honey. You feel so good.” He leans forward and kisses the top of my head as a solid knock lands on the front door.

Oh my God!

Colton glances toward me, his thick, flaccid dick still tucked into my warmth. “That’s your father. I saw a text come in when I was,” he glances away and back again, “I couldn’t stop myself. I’m sorry.”

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“Don’t be sorry. What do we do?”

“We tell him what’s going on.”

“No, we most certainly do not tell him what’s going on. He’ll lose it.”

Colton holds me against his chest. “He’ll be mad, but he’ll get over it.”

I laugh as another heavy knock hits the door. “Yeah, and what proof do you have to back that up? My father is still holding a grudge against the bag boy from Price-Mart in the Springs from ten years ago because he missed a tube of toothpaste. He’s not going to forgive us for this. This is way bigger than a missed item in a grocery bag.” My heart pounds against my chest as I speak. “Plus, what are we even doing? This isn’t permanent, remember?”

He huffs under his breath and pulls out of me before grabbing the t-shirt off the ground and tugging it over my head. “Okay, so we’ll wait. I’ll follow your lead.”

My lead? Yeah, right.

Colton tugs on his boxers and pulls on the t-shirt he was wearing, before I open the door and accept the fate that I know is coming.

The guilt. The terrible, awful, stomach twisting guilt.

God, what was I thinking? Colton is twenty years older than me. He’s my father’s best friend. This is wrong. Really, stupidly wrong.

Dad leans into me and kisses the top of my head before handing me a pink box with the pie shops logo stamped on top. “Last piece. Turns out everyone in town likes that Potter fellow.” He steps one boot inside the door. “Where’s that buddy of mine? I’ve got a bone to pick with him.”

“A bone to pick?” My voice lifts to heights that only a liar knows as I say, “What kind of bone?”

Colton steps around the door with a glass bottle of beer in his hand. “Hey, man. What’s goin’ on?” There’s a slight difference in his voice. My father isn’t the most observant man in the universe, but he will definitely notice the shift in tone.

“You left your broke fuckin’ ATV in the driveway all week. You plan on draggin’ that home anytime soon or is it my problem now?”

Colton laughs. “Your problem now, I reckon. Broke on your property.” This is usual banter for my father and Colton, so maybe this won’t be as weird as I thought it would be.

Dad glances toward me. “You hear from your sister?”

“No, why? Everything okay?”

“Yeah, just worried about her. I know she’s struggling after the divorce. Last I heard she was going to adopt a big dog.”

My brows narrow. “Haven’t heard anything about that. I’ll have to check on it.” I step back as I talk, fidgeting with the torn hem of Colton’s t-shirt.

Colton’s t-shirt. I’m wearing nothing but Colton’s t-shirt.

Heat flushes over my cheeks and my throat goes dry. “Well, I should probably get to bed. I’ve gotta get up early with the kid and...” I continue to back up, desperate to escape. Trouble is, there’s a chair pulled out I’m not expecting and my foot catches it, sending me down to the ground with the pie box still in hand.

Humiliation. That’s an emotion I was hoping I wouldn’t have to add to my bingo card today.

Colton turns back, sets his beer on the table, and lifts me from the ground as though I’m a feather. “Jesus, honey. You okay?”

“Yeah,” I say low, though I’m not sure I’m okay at all. Not because of the fall, but because of the way my father is staring at us.

Colton sets me on the edge of the kitchen counter and brushes his big, rough hand down over my smooth leg. “There’s no swelling. Does it hurt to rotate?”

“No, I’m okay.” Our eyes meet, and a spark of electricity runs through me in the same way it had earlier. My lips ache for his. My body aches for his. My entire existence aches for his.

“You okay, Nora?” Dad steps forward, his focus turning to Colton. “She’s okay, man.”

If he didn’t notice something was up before, he notices now.

“Yeah,” I jump down from the counter. “I just tripped. I’m fine. I really should get to bed, though.”

“I’ve gotta take off anyway,” Dad groans as he reaches for a hug, which I oblige... though it’s weird. “Work comes early. Let me know what you think of that pie,

kiddo. Love you.”

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

My heart squeezes and my stomach churns. Why am I such a terrible person?

“Love you too, Dad. Thanks for stopping by. I’ll talk to Daphne tomorrow and find out more about the dog thing.”

He nods, shakes Colton’s hand, and steps back out into the night, leaving Colton and I staring at each other once again. Except this time, the truth is clearer than it’s been all night. This thing with Colton can never be a one-night event, not even under the best of circumstances. There’s always going to be electricity between us, an undeniable chemistry, a reason to need him, to want him. There’s a pull that I can’t deny.

“What are you thinking, honey?” He brushes a strand of hair out of my vision and lifts me back up onto the dining room table as he pets my face.

“I don’t know what to think. I can’t lie to my dad, and I don’t want to disappoint Ellie. I don’t understand why you’d be into me over the hot mom, and I don’t know how we make any of this work, but also... I want you to bend me over and take me again.” I pant as I speak, unable to make eye contact. “Maybe we should sleep. It’s... yeah. We should sleep on this.” I wiggle off the table, but he grabs and pulls me back in place.

“Not a chance. Sleep isn’t gonna make this go away. I need you, Nora. Your dad is gonna have to come to terms with that, and the mom earlier is just a lady. I only see you. I only think about you. I only fantasize about you. I only want you.” He brushes his square hand down over his beard. “Do you know how many nights I spent jerking off to thoughts of you in your bathing suit last summer at the lake? It’s a sickening

number of times.”

My cheeks turn pink, but my panties are soaked again.

“Aside from all that, you’re exactly what Ellie needs. I’m not letting you walk away from us, Nora.” His gaze holds focused on mine as my phone vibrates on the table behind us. It could be my father letting me know he saw the energy between Colton and I. It could be my sister calling to avoid another lonely night. It could be the lottery calling to tell me I’ve just won ten million dollars.

Right now, none of it matters. I’m stuck, unable to move, my gaze locked on Colton’s, my heart pounding with his.

“What do we do from here?” I whisper, leaning ever so slightly closer to his lips.

His hand digs into the back of my hair gently and he pulls me close. “I think we let this happen and see where it goes.”

“Yeah?” My tone is low, and our lips are brushing against each other’s.

“Yeah,” he repeats with a groan. “That’s the only way, honey. You and me. Nothing else matters.”

I swallow hard and crush against his mouth, kissing his lips with fervor until I’m dizzy with desire and we’re stripping each other down again.

If someone had told me one night would change my life, I’m not sure I’d have believed them. But as I stand at the helm of desire, I know nothing will ever be the same again. A fire has started, a blaze has consumed me, and I’m desperate to keep burning.

Epilogue

Colton

One Year Later

I hammer Nora's little pink sign into the yard and stand back to check that it's even. We've been working for the better part of the year to get her massage therapy business off the ground. At first, we thought it made sense to open a spa in town. Then, we thought of working with the inn on Main Street but ultimately decided that a little parlor right here at home was the way to go.

"What do you think?" I ask as she snuggles into my side, rubbing her hand over her expanded stomach. "Straight enough?"

"I love it! Thank you for building all this for me." She's thanked me half a million times over the last few months, but it's me who should be thanking her.

"You're carrying our baby, you adopted Ellie as your own, and you cook and clean for us. You do everything, honey. I don't deserve you."

She turns her body toward me and stares up into my eyes. "You do physical labor all day to keep us fed and warm, and you still found time to build the shop for me. So, I'm gonna be thankful." Her voice turns playful as she says, "Probably forever, really."

"I'm just glad you found a niche that didn't mean you'd be touching other men. A women's massage center was a good idea."

"Thanks!" Her tone is perky and sweet. "I've already sold out of monthly memberships, so I think once I get the ball rolling, I'll do pretty well."

A loud pickup truck climbs up the stone driveway, and we both turn to see Nora's dad bumping up the way with Ellie giggling in the passenger seat. She hops out and runs toward us the second the engine turns off.

"Mom, Grandpa took me to the playground, and they're almost done, finally! Mrs. Robinson said they only have two slides left to put in, and... oh! There's gonna be a fishing tournament there this weekend. Grandpa signed me up! Can I go?"

"Of course you can go!" Nora squeezes Ellie against her stomach and kisses her head gently. I love seeing the two of them together. They've gotten so close over the past year. It's almost like Nora was always Ellie's mother. "Why don't you get cleaned up and we'll make dinner together. I got the stuff to make Dad's favorite."

"Lasagna!" Ellie grins. "You make it so much better than Becca's mom." We haven't seen much of her lately, which is a good thing if you ask me. "You found the secret ingredient that makes it like Dad's grandma."

"Thank you, baby. Go get cleaned up and we'll get started!" Ellie nods toward Nora and runs into the house with a bounce of excitement. She's really come out of her shell since Nora got here.

Source Creation Date: May 27, 2025, 6:38 am

“The massage parlor looks great,” my buddy says as he lands a kiss on top of Nora’s head and hands her a pie box from the shop downtown. She’s been addicted to the butterbeer pie since the night we made things official on the dining room table. “Must have taken you months.”

“It’s nothing. I worked here and there as I could. Thanks for taking Ellie out today. She loves spending time with you.”

“It’s good havin’ her around.” My buddy kicks the dirt with his boot, and glances toward his daughter as though our interactions are still shaky.

I can’t blame him. I’d feel weird, too. There’s no doubt about it. That said, he’s handled the whole thing much better than he could’ve. He supported the wedding we shared here on the farm a few months back, he spends time with Ellie, and he’s gone out of his way to bring gifts for baby Jack who’s due in the next couple of months. I’m impressed with how well he’s accepted everything.

“Well,” he clears his throat and stands straighter, “I better head home. You two call if you need anything.”

“Love you, Dad.” Nora holds her father close. “Thank you for everything.”

“Love you more, kiddo. You call me if you need me to kick this guy’s ass, okay?”

She smiles wide and glances toward me. “You got it, Dad.”

As he pulls away, I’m left standing with the girl of my dreams. A woman I thought

about in ways I shouldn't have been, though I'm glad I did. It's moments like these, when the gravel crunches beneath my boots and the sun catches the curve of her smile, that I'm reminded how lucky I am. Sure, I have a gorgeous little farmhouse, fields that stretch out for miles, and a big red pickup truck I'm pretty proud of, but none of that would mean anything without Nora. I rub my hand over her stomach and lean into her lips, kissing them gently as Ellie comes running back out of the house with her pigtails flying back in the breeze.

Loving my life is an understatement. I love Nora's lasagna. I love the way the horses trust me after a long training session. I love the way the sky turns red before a storm. My family, though, there's a bigger word for what I feel about them. A word I'm not sure has been spoken yet. An emotion that might be too big for words all together. Whatever it is, it's everything, and I'll protect it with everything I have... forever.